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ABSTRACT

A "best case" model for the role of women in the postindustrial communications era predicts positive leadership roles based on the preindustrial work characteristics of cooperation and consensus. A "worst case" model finds women entrepreneurs succumbing to the competitive male ethos and extracting the maximum amount of work from employees in an industrialized service economy. A brief review of successive communication technologies and the current status of women in communication fields suggests that women are going to have to enter into a process of "demythifying" future roles if new communication patterns are to effected. Women, as the world's "minoritized majority," have the experience and knowledge to promote a new world order based on a democratization of knowledge. Women must contribute their own insights, intuitions, experiences, research, interpretations, philosophies, and theories to world views and world hypotheses. Expanded and linked coalitions of women in all fields and endeavors can substantially aid in these efforts. (Author/FL)

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A DIFFERENT CALL TO ARMS:

WOMEN IN THE CORE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION

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ABSTRACT

A DIFFERENT CALL TO ARMS: WOMEN IN THE CORE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION

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A "best-case" scenario for the role of women in the communications era utilizes pre-industrial characterizations predicting positive leadership roles in the post-industrial era, based on patterns of socialization and communication styles of cooperation and consensus. A "worst-case" model finds women entrepreneurs succumbing to the competitive male ethos of industrial society as harsh followers of the old school of efficiency, extracting the maximum amount of output from their workers -- an industrialized service economy.

A brief review of successive communication technologies, and the current role and status of women in communication fields encourages a warning about their future roles. Women are going to have to enter into a process of de-mythifying and avant-guarding future roles if new communication patterns rather than old industrial realities are to be effected.

It is suggested that women, as the world's "minoritized majority," have the appropriate experiential equation to lead efforts toward a New World Order, based on a democratization of knowledge. Women must contribute their own insights, intuitions, experiences, research, interpretations, philosophies, and theories to world views and world hypotheses. Expanded and linked coalitions of women in all fields and endeavors can substantially aid in these efforts.

A DIFFERENT CALL TO ARMS:

Women in the Core of the Communications Revolution

Only a few years ago, it took a lot of searching to find one or more articles or items to drop into files labeled for the information age... cable TV, personal computers, satellite TV, fiber optics, laser transmission, home communication center. Now home and office mail boxes overflow with news about the emerging communication technologies.

Whether it's evolution, revolution, convolution, or only the fallout from pollution, there can be little doubt that something is happening when women are "imaged" as part of the change.

Best-selling author John (Megatrends) Naisbitt writes in a front-page newsletter **Viewpoint** for American Express gold card-members about a trend that is gathering great momentum -- the shift in America from a male-dominated society to a much more androgynous one:

> It's not that we're switching from a male to a female society; in this new society male and female contributions are much more balanced. This trend is already having a profound effect on the business world. Women are becoming much more assertive in demanding salary equality with men for comparable work. Another indication — about a third of the exploding number of new companies that are being formed today are being started by women. (Naisbitt 1983).

Futurist Robert Theobald, who is acknowledged as coining the term, "the communications era," also predicts a balanced participation from all ages and both sexes as a primary criterion in the selection process for future decision-making roles. (Theobald 1980)

He notes, however, that arguments will still be raging as to whether the differences in reactions between the sexes are due to

genetic or socialization patterns. But, in the future, he projects that many women appear to find the patterns of process and cooperation required for the communications era easier than many men:

> It is hoped that the new styles of socialization now being developed may help to limit the problems which many men have with developing cooperative styles. Nevertheless,it is recognized that very serious problems lie ahead for certain types of male egos,for some individuals seem to find their primary gratification in triumphing over others rather than working together for common goals. (1980:19)

Sociologist Jessie Bernard, a prolific writer about women's concerns, brings a somewhat more balanced perspective about the shape of the female world in 2020. (Bernard 1981a) She builds a "best-case" pattern (á la Theobald) and a "worst-case" model (based on projections of immediate trends, from recent occupational data) in which women entrepreneurs may succumb to the competitive male ethos of industrial society. "They may become 'vicious' in the old male style. virtually old-time Taylorites, harsh followers of the old school of efficiency, extracting the maximum amount of output from their workers" -- an industrialized service economy.

A pre-industrial characterization of women, which seemed too ill-fitting for the industrial era, appears to provide positive predictions for the leadership role of women in the post-industrial era. Bernard notes an almost inexhaustible documentation shows emphases on altruism, on giving, on serving others, on taking care of others. Love and/or duty were the prime motivators. In startling contrast to this other-oriented ethos is that of both the economy and polity -- male turf -- where self-interest is not only permitted but actually mandated. Winning is the name of the game, by intimidation,

if necessary, she points out.

Of special interest, she writes, are the different styles of communication that accompany these differences in structure and ethos. Men engage in a kind of "market" style, everyone competing for the attention of others. She refers to laboratory studies of game behavior which show the behavior of the members of the male world to be highly competitive. They show members of the female world behaving more collaboratively, more cooperatively.

Noting that the Theobald model argues that people must work closely with each other and know that they will not be ridiculed or their ideas used against them, Bernard believes that the ethos of the female world prepares them for this style of communication:

> They are more willing to listen and support the speaker trying to make a point. They interrupt less. There is less one-upsmanship. They give cues such as "uh-huh" to show that they are listening.(Bernard 1981b: 380-81)

The predictions for women in the future, based on consensual communication styles, are often in stark contrast with current occupational situations and trend projections for the status of women. The comparison encourages a warning.

"Herstory" as a guidepost to the future

A quick flashback to women's roles when other revolutionary technologies came on the public scene indicates that men have always played the more active role in shaping these technologies and determining their use, while women have generally been the passive recipients of what has been offered or trickled down after the "real" needs were met. (Rush, Buck, and Ogan 1982)

Raymond Williams, in his critical analysis of television (1974), believes that most of the advances in communication technology have been the result of intentions, growing out of a complex of needs (usually commercial and/or military), invention, and application. For instance, the telegraph was needed for the railroads, radio was perceived as an advanced form of telegraphy which would allow business and military enterprises to better control their operation, and telephones were needed for commercial communications. "It is especially a characteristic of the communications systems that all were foreseen--not in utopian but in technical ways--before the crucial components of the developed systems had been discovered and refined. In no way is this history of communications systems creating a new society or new social conditions," he writes. (Williams 1974:18)

If we understand that the needs and intention behind many of these successive communications technologies arose from commercial and military enterprises, it is little wonder that women were excluded from the early decision-making processes and only marginally involved in the creative stages when the processes of generating the style-setting forms and contents of new communication systems were going on. In other words, women were not in the board or war rooms, or in the laboratories when needs were being defined, technological applications developed, and far-reaching institution-determining decisions made.

Currently, studies in the U.S. and other countries as to the nature of female stereotypes in television programs have consistent findings about women depicted in traditional and subordinate roles as compared to men. Furthermore, when media institutions in the U.S. and in

other countries were examined in terms of relative male/female employment patterns, the suspicision that men are making the decisions and creating the content was confirmed.*

The American Newspaper Publisher's Association has estimated that about 38 percent of the total workforce in the daily press were women in 1981; the group held steady at 36 percent for several years before that date. Thus, women are underrepresented according to their distribution in the population, more than one-half, with about 43 percent in the workforce. In top-level management (department head or above), only 2.4 percent of daily newspapers had women managers in 1977; that percentage increased to about 4.5 percent by 1981. The average salaries of top-level women managers was $8,000 less than those earned by top-level men managers in 1977; then, a mean difference of $15,938 was found.

Women earned about 74 cents for every dollar paid to their male peers in the data programming workforce in 1981. Men still greatly outnumber women in the U.S. computer workforce, often by a factor of three to one. The only area where the number of women workers surpassed the number of men was in the operators category, also the lowest paying category for both men and women -- 63 percent of all computer operators are women. However, while men were a minority in this area, their paychecks still beat women's by approximately $110/week.

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*Summary information presented in this section is detailed, with documentation, in Rush, Buck, Ogan 1982.

It is as if there is some mystical "ceiling" (or "flooring") effect in the form of a ratio of concentration in occupational status and/or salary level for women. The ratio usually resides around a 1/4:3/4 or 1/3:2/3 proportion. For example, of officials and managers in television stations, about 75 percent are males and the other one quarter are females; and, as seen above, women in computerland earn about 74 cents for every dollar earned by male peers, men still out-number women by about a factor of three-to-one except in the lowest-paying operative area where 63 percent are women; females represent about 36-38 percent of the employees in the daily press workforce, and so on.

Indeed, the ratio of concentration of women in occupational status and/or salary levels could well be called the "Ratio of Underlying Sexist Hierarchies," operationalized as "You've Come A Long Way, Baby" (in numbers) -- "Whoops, That's Far Enough!" (in positions of decision-making).

If the dominant ways of looking at the world of the future reflect communication realities rather than industrial realities, as the Theobald model presupposes, then it behooves women to keep checking and cross-checking perceptions of reality, and to keep asking, "Whose communications revolution is it, really?"

The process of de-mythifying and avant-guarding the future

It took lo, these many years of consciousness-raising (for many of us, it started with Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique, followed by Ms. magazine's "click-ing" rather than cluck-ing support, and the focus of Donna Allen's Media Report to Women) to convince us to stop paying dues to a "minoritized" majority.

Women's struggle to get to the "top," in decision-making positions, has been long and difficult and, too often, futile. Not only futile in the sense of not making it but, also, after having achieved it, of questioning if it was worth it after all. Bernard speaks to this point, noting that women are entering the economy at the very moment a transformation is taking place in it. She notes that women's experience in industrial society has not been reassuring:

> As more and more of them are becoming increasingly exposed to the industrial economy or Gesellschaft and how it operates they do not like what they see. The ethos of their world (Gemeinshaft) does not help them reach the top of the corporate ladder, it actually retards them. Still, some have made it to the top. But an increasing number ask if the price -- accepting the ethos of the male world -- is too high a price to pay. And for some a major issue is coming to be how to come to terms with the ethos of the male world.
>
> They may not have to. They may, in fact, be in a particularly auspicious position to help the male world in the transition from the industrial to the postindustrial or communications society...(Bernard 1981a:8)

We may not have to . . . watch revolutions come and go while the actors remain the same. We've had other communications revolutions but this one is widely heralded as the great "equalizer" and "enhancer" of human beings -- a global-wide self-actualization based on an information democracy. (Masuda 1981, 1982)

An ideal, a vision? Perhaps. It has vested interests, widespread inequalities, habits, customs and, even fear of the unknown, as powerful antagonists. One of the most constructive worriers is Future Survey editor, Michael Marien, who offers the other side of the coin as the Age of Infoglut, or Non-Communication and the Future. (Marien 1982)

Non-communication is defined as the multitude of instances where full communication ought to occur but does not; that in our seemingly well-educated society, ignorance -- the gap between what we know and what we ought to know -- is widespread. He writes:

> Advocates of an information society, such as Masuda, do consider the possibility of a controlled society or an automated state. But they do not consider the far more fundamental problem that the new information technologies inadvertently aggravate this condition by increasing our technologically-induced hubris, while adding to our infoglut and ignorance. Indeed, it is notably ironic that information society proponents are so alienated from their critics that, apparently, they do not even recognize the criticisms that have been made. (Marien 1982:63)

Marien notes that we should encourage a synergy of idealism and realism -- and we should not confuse the two by indulging in the widespread delusion of equating ideals with evolutionary trends if not actual attainment. This comes as "realistic" advice to women whose evolutionary trends and actual attainments have been measured on a ruler of inches with miles yet to go.

Perhaps it's time to shirk some responsibilities for realities (or myths) that weren't of our making and to resist reverting, as Bernard points out, to the old redemptionist point of view that women will reform the world. (Bernard 1981a) If we can bypass the industrial era and the competitive self-interest demanded by its ethos, if we can take advantage of the socialization that we have been exposed to in the female world, then perhaps we can enter the communication age well prepared to make our contribution to it, as Bernard suggests. She also admonishes that "it all depends": to a considerable extent on women themselves.

It's a different call to arms.

In order to shake off some vestiges of the old reality based on centuries of myths, perpetuated by negative and distorted stereotypes and malignant mindsets, we are going to have to come to grips with what feminist theologian Elizabeth Dodson Gray calls "conceptual traps." Such a trap is to the thought world of the mind what the astronomers' black holes are to the universe, she writes. A conceptual trap is a way of thinking that is like a room -- which once inside -- you cannot imagine a world outside. (Gray 1982:17)

Gray views patriarchy as one of those conceptual traps, in which a culture is slanted so that men are valued a lot and women are valued less, or in which men's prestige is up and women's prestige is down. She writes:

> When I say patriarchy is pervasive, what I mean is that men are always in control of the myth system. Even in matrilineal societies where descent is counted through women, it is still the men who rule the myth system ... The decisive question is always, "Who is in charge of the social and religious construction of reality?" (1982:22)

She points out that "reality is read in," that reality does not just exist "out there." Rather, we perceive reality through the eyeglasses of our social formulations. Everything we know is subtly influenced in the knowing by the standing point of the viewer -- everything is standpoint-dependent.

> Men have named and defined reality from their point of view, their standing point in the experience of life. The biblical account of Adam "naming" the world and everything in it ... is a mythological account of a profoundly important truth in the sociology of our contemporary knowledge. We live in Adam's world, for men socially constructed the reality which defined and controlled how people would perceive their world.
>
> If you doubt it has all been "named" from a man's experience, ask yourself why a computer, when it's working, it's "up" and, when it's not working, it's "down." (1982:48-9)

Futurist Hazel Henderson finds the confusion in the 80's conducive to a major rethinking of outworn concepts and formulae that is the vital prerequisite for reshaping a national consensus around emerging values and goals.

This process of paradigm shifts, changing values and goals she calls the "politics of reconceptualization." (Henderson 1981a, 1981b) If it is freely joined and widely and democratically debated in our country, she believes it will lead to a new consensus, a shared redefinition of social reality.

She says that many citizens share her view that these new limits to material consumption are "good news." They challenge us to grow up and reach for greater emotional maturity, she writes.

> We realize that we cannot continue simply to grow in the terms economists use to measure wealth -- whether dollars, francs, pounds, yen, or rubles. We cannot continue to measure progress by the Gross National Product. Indeed, economists are now getting in the way of the important, new public debates that must take place in all mass-consumption societies about <u>what is valuable</u>, under the radically new conditions of a crowded, depleted, polluted, and, above all, interdependent planet. (1981a:13)

Obviously any time of change, of transition, of disruption, is also a time of questioning. But the questions need to come from our "new" brains, not our old ones. First we have to de-myth and then re-myth the human condition. Women in the U.S. have a reasonably realistic idea of their current conditions which were brought into focus with the protest movements of the 1960's and 70's.

One movement learned from the other how to get concerns taken into account by the public in making national policy. The methods varied but the objectives were similar -- to get serious messages into

the mainstreams of American consciousness. Not an easy task. The messages did not fit neatly into the stable, patterned, fragmented, constrained and restrained mass media system. Teach-ins, take-overs, sit-ins, burning draft cards, inaugurating pigs, earth days, freedom marches, taking hostages -- ways to capture the attention of the media and to reach the public, to reach ourselves.

The Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press describes those days and activities as a movement to democratize the mass media. The Institute believes that the protest movements can be studied as parts of a single movement to expand the nation's communication system to include more information from a larger number of the American public. (WIFP 1983:64)

A lot of myths were put on public display and many cracks of distortion appeared in the media's mirror of society. And several persons, individually and collectively, saw different realities-- a re-mything process was begun. Each of us had different stories to tell, but the similarities of experiences, images, stereotypes, began to "click." We weren't out of step with society; we just didn't have all the information we needed to realize that if the shoe didn't fit, we didn't have to wear it.

At a time when the impressions made by our footprints are seemingly becoming larger and more noticeable, technological "footprints" via satellites are covering our globe. Another "sizing up" and de-mything process has begun. Unesco's International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, under the presidency of Sean MacBride, reports:

> ... Yet, of all the violation of human rights, the most systematic, widespread and entrenched is the denial of equality to women. Despite some progress in recent years, there is no country in the world where women have achieved full equality. Although making up half or more than half of the population, they are treated as a minority group, disadvantaged and powerless. Often, the burdens of poverty, unemployment and educational backwardness weigh more heavily on women than on men. As an alarming example, two-thirds of the illiterates in the world are women, and the education given to girls are compared to boys tends to be inferior and is more often curtailed at an early age. Women need free access on equal terms to education, social participation and communication if they are to share rightfully in solving the problems of their societies ... (Unesco 1980:189)

The globalization of values

Many of the characteristics of the industrial era have been variously described as left-brain, linear, Western, reductionist, materialistic, rational, objective, verbal, logical, and so on. Post-industrial characteristics are expected to be globally conceptualized while acted on at the local level. The contrasting characteristics have multi-dimensional perspectives:

	Industrialism (Left-brain)	Post-Industrialism (Right-brain)
Human Perspectives	Achievement	Self- Actualization
	Self-Control	Self-Expression
	Responsive	Anticipative
Global Perspectives	Independence	Interdependence
	Separate Goals	Linked Objectives
	Separation	Coordination
Managerial Perspectives	Mechanistic	Organic
	Specific	Comprehensive
	Short-term	Long-term

SOURCE: (Feather 1980:7)

The potential is collective brainpower -- an emergent global mind -- which brings forth a "thinking" and "feeling" futuristic network.

Henderson argues that the New World Order can be founded both on scientific and ethical principles, noting that we are discovering the New World Order and remembering that we know it already, since five principles emerging in Westernized science are found in all religious, spiritual traditions. "Ethical principles have become the frontiers of scientific inquiry. Morality, at last, has become pragmatic, while so-called idealism has become realistic," she writes (Henderson 1980:55)

And to these future observations can be added: the spreading of benefits rather than the concentration of wealth; the maximization of choice rather than the suppression of diversity; the diffusion of individual responsibility rather than hierarchical command and control; cooperation, not coercion; more "sharing" transactions and fewer "exchange" transactions; more "positive-sum" games, fewer "zero-sum" games; horizontal structures rather than vertical structures.

"With nobody in general charge but everybody partly in charge," adds Harland Cleveland (who advocates that people lead their leaders in an information society), "more participatory decision-making implies a need for much feedback widely available. That means more openness, less secrecy -- not as an ideological preference but as a technological imperative." (Cleveland 1982:172)

As a philosophical basis for restructuring the nation's communication system, especially in view of new communication technologies, the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press presents two proposals for study: (1) people should be able to speak for themselves rather than having their information interpreted and reported by others, and (2) there should be equality among individuals in their ability to communicate with their fellow citizens. (WIFP 1983:64)

A different call to arms

Perhaps it seems demeaning to point out that before we re-structure, re-myth, and re-conceptualize we must "see" the structures, myths, and concepts already in place. Yet, that awareness and recognition are essential for our own assumptions for and approaches to the widely-heralded age of high tech. Some are much further down this road of realization than are others of us, including this author. If this can be considered a "working paper" (in that it needs a lot more thought and work), then perhaps all of us can contribute to it.* Toward this end, the following thoughts are offered: (1) Women, as the world's "minoritized majority", have the appropriate experiential equation to lead efforts toward a New World Order, based on a democratization of knowledge. In so doing, women must primarily rely upon our own insights, intuition, experiences, research, interpretations, philosophy, and theory-building as the bases for world views and world hypotheses. To effect this, networks of women's coalitions in all fields and endeavors need to be expanded and linked.

*the author is grateful to the anonymous evaluators of this paper; it has been revised, and hopefully is better, because of their comments.

(2) Priorities for efforts undertaken need to be assessed and established. For example, there is an extensive documentation about inequities between the sexes in the workplace and in symbolic representation. A continual re-substantiation of this paramount evidence provides a necessary check on reality. But it is not sufficient in and of itself to intervene in the underlying structure and dynamics of social and cultural reproductions, nor to profoundly influence the sources of change and contestation when there are prevailing distributions of power and control in society. "Who constructed and continues to construct the social and cultural reality?" leads to questions of access, participation, manipulation, etc., and thus to some understanding of the distributions of knowledge in a society.

(3) Communication may well be the glue of society, but the study and teaching of communication is a many-splintered thing. Divergent schools of thought, such as European versus American (U.S.), critical versus administrative versus cultural, must be approached carefully as any field of minds warrants. Yet, this may be a blessing in disguise for groups in society who believe that their moral/value systems have been excluded. Debate and dialogue about communication issues are expanding as are the confrontations and collaborations--and this is taking place more often in regional and global settings.

A few examples and illustrations about these three points may be helpful here, if we keep in mind that those selected are not meant to limit nor bias either the points or the examples.

Emerging, experienced leadership. Women, as a minoritized majority, often seem to live in two worlds which do not mesh well. Welfare Mom, Superwoman, Single Studess, appear to have little in common but do indeed share second-class citizenship or special status because they happen to be women. Thus,

a majority status has been an elusive factor because of divisive illusions about women. The political power of the "gender gap" (percentage differences between men and women in voting on issues and candidates) in the U.S., however, has promise of creating a major force.

The premise behind women being the leaders of a New World Order is that collectively we are more than half of the world's population and, individually and in groups, there aren't many forms of inequalities we haven't seen and/or experienced -- agism, racism, sexism, tokenism, and most other "isms." They are a part of women's social perspectives -- we know about inequality and we have sufficient numbers to do something about it.

As one example, a one-day workshop on women and development brought forth a book on Women and World Change: Equity Issues in Development. (Black and Cottrell 1981) The premise of the book was that national development could not be understood without attention to the role of women in relation to social change on all continents, in both fully and less industrialized economies, and in the past as well as the present. The female participants and contributors represented political science, sociology, and anthropology. As recently as this past June, 39 women's groups in the U.S., with 15 million members, planned how to take advantage of the gender gap. The women agreed, among other things, that their primary efforts would be to register as voters women who are poor, Black, Hispanic, single or young, since those groups have the smallest percentage of women already voting, whatever their party preference. (Mollison 1983)

One final example relates to research. Canadian sociologists Thelma McCormack examined the research in three national commission reports about media violence and pornography. She charges both sets of research show

sexist biases in the way the problems were conceptualized and the research designed. Further, that "machismo," an attitude idealizing rugged masculinity in response to sexual insecurity, taking the form of fears of impotence and homosexuality, may well be the intervening variable to explain discrepant findings in violence and pornography. In terms of social policy, it implies that the alternative to cultural censorship of either pornography or media violence is a new perspective on the status of women and the normalization of homosexuality, male or female. (McCormack 1980:574-85)

Priorities. The second point about establishing priorities as we go into a new stage of national and international development is action-oriented, while applying the "best-fitting" philosophical and theoretical frameworks to guide our work. Much work has already been done to help fill the gaps in our historical and contemporary situation and to point to future directions.

For instance, Marion Marzolf's history of women journalists pulled them "up from the footnotes" and made them come alive for their own direct contributions to the field rather than being covered by the shadows of others usually spotlighted as important figures. (Marzolf 1977) Butler and Paisley provided a sourcebook for research and action about women and the mass media. (1980) Gallagher broadens our research to an international scope in Unequal Opportunities: The Case of Women and the Media. (1981)

Gaining footholds in all levels of societal influence is important, but the crucial priority appears to be a sharing of the ultimate bastion of power -- leadership positions. Research conducted on the nature of promotional decisions in two large companies supports that concern. The study found that while the greatest managerial potential might be found in young, aggressive individuals, top management officials tended to promote to mid-management those women who were older and less aggressive, thus, preventing any movement to the top by

women. (New York Times News Service 1982) In the conclusion of Hearth and Homes: Images of Women in the News Media, co-editor James Benet draws attention to one issue that is usually unmentioned when questionning if media treatment of women will improve -- the scarcity of women who exercise ownership over newspapers, magazines, or broadcasting stations. (Tuchman, Daniels, Benet 1978:265-71) He notes that without far wider control by women who hold the ultimate power of decision, the mass media will continue to have its policies decided on the whole by men -- with all the possibility of misunderstanding or deliberate distortion that implies.

Philosophical and theoretical guides. The philosophical and theoretical perspectives need collective discussion and agreement. Each group of nationals needs to understand their own society at the outset. The U.S. capitalist democracy is certainly one which has continuous world-wide attention and scrutiny. Contemporary U.S. society is viewed by some economists as a split-level structure in which there is a periodic trade-off between equality and efficiency -- tensions between the political principles of democracy and the economic principles of capitalism. (Okun 1975) We must have plans on how to confront this age-old tradeoff in the information age. (Rush 1983)

The Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press has a research and publishing program that is based on seven assumptions for a new philosophy of communication which is worthy of consideration: (1) People make their judgments on the basis of the information they have at a given time; (2) Each person is the best judge of her or his own best interests; (3) Media owners give us the information they think is important for us to know;

(4) Media do not mirror society; (5) For the public to obtain the information of the majority, people must be able to speak for themselves; (6) Power is based on the number of people you can reach with your information; and (7) Equalizing power among us would require that we all have equal means of reaching the public to communicate our information when we wish, in the way most suitable to our message. (WIFP 1983)

Butler and Paisley developed a consciousness scale that classifies media images of women in five consciousness levels in an effort to move from tabulations of images to the levels, or intensities. of feminine roles that the images portray. These consciousness levels correspond to stereotypes in the belief systems of writers, editors, producers, etc. The authors, upon different applications of the scale, show that analysts can reliably apply the consciousness scale. They also note that it may raise as many questions as it answers, but that is not all bad (italics are mine). (1980)

The critical approach (holistic, societal) to communication research, especially from the feminist viewpoint, may hold great potential for the women's movement in its developmental stage, despite its sole purpose frequently seeming to be in opposition to U.S. empirical research (administrative, service, audience effects) and detractors dismissing it as Marxist. Its advocates and practitioners have played no small part in the development of mass communication research in Europe, particularly in Britain. British communication scholar James Halloron sets out a strong and reasoned defense of the approach[1] and notes his decision to adopt this line by the fact that "I see this developing, critical thrust not only as offering the greatest contrast and challenge to the older approaches, but also as providing the major contribution to the current international debate on vital communication

issues." (Halloran 1982:169; also see Blumler 1980:33-44; Lang 1980:45-57; Golding and Murdock 1980:59-76)

In essence, then, women must assume their appropriate leadership in a New World Order, have their priorities established, and have in place philosophical and theoretical perspectives to better guide their concrete practices and actions.

Naisbitt (1983) notes that "in times of great changes, the individual's power and leverage are enormous ... We can either become victims of the great changes coming -- or we can make them work for us to accomplish extraordinary things."

It's a different call to arms. Women are extraordinarily prepared, experienced, and qualified ... to be in the core of the communications revolution.

Discussion Note

1. It is not possible to give much more than a "flavor" of the essence of critical and administrative approaches here.

"Administrative research, as Lazarsfeld defines it, is based on the 'idea that modern media of communication are tools handled by people or agencies for given purposes'. It centers on a more or less standardized set of problems, including the nature of the audience, the impact of the message content, and how the one affects the other. These things are not always obvious, and to gain an understanding of them requires empirically-grounded knowledge. Such knowledge is also required if we are to understand 'the more general role of the media of communication in the present social system', a matter that rarely interests the sponsor or client of administrative research but is the central concern of Critical Theory. For this the purely administrative definition of a problem is usually too narrow. Research designed to answer a particular, even a practical purpose is often enriched and vitalized by the incorporation of perspectives derived from formulations by critical theorists about how general trends in society affect the way mass media function and, consequently, affect certain basic values. Lazarsfeld welcomes Critical Theory as a potentially vitalizing influence on administrative research." (Lang 1980:55)

Lang argues that the incompatibility between the different streams of communication research was not nearly as sharp as those who mistake ideology for social science may want to believe.

Some, including this author, believe the integrative roles of both are important. Blumler speaks to a related point, although relegating empirical research to a role perhaps not to the liking of some:

"The paradox is soluble only by assigning to empirical work a firmly subordinate and guide role. The foundations of critical theory are rooted in self-evident truths about the nature of the social system and its connections with the communication system. The task of empirical enquiry, then, is largely to expose those links concretely and to show how the known social patterns impose themselves on, and operate within, the communication sphere in practice." (Blumler 1980:35)

Halloron points to more reasons why he believes critical research is valuable and gives a brief description of the approach:

"Another point worth making is that on the whole critical research, although stemming from a wide range of positions and reflecting different values, is less likely than conventional research to be encumbered by historical and institutional relationships with journalism and broadcasting. Moreover, it is not as closely linked with markets, audiences and publics, and is less inclined to have a service, administrative or commercial character. Needless to say, it is not without value implications, but it is definitely more independent of the institutions it is studying.

"As far as media institutions are concerned, the approach is more likely to be from the outside, with a critical policy or problem orientation. Critical research does not ignore problems central to the media, but ideally it never takes these problems as defined by media practitioners or politicians. Its starting points are the major social issues of our time, not necessarily the major media issues as narrowly defined by the professionals, owners or controllers.

"At the risk of over-simplification, let me attempt to summarize the main characteristics ofthe emerging approach. First, and foremost is that it deals with communication as a social process; secondly, that it studies media institutions not in isolation but as, and together with, other institutions, and within the wider social context (nationally and internationally); and thirdly, that it conceptualizes research in terms of structure, organization, professionalization, socialization, participation, and so on.

"One of the clear implications of this is that all aspects of the communication process should be studied. The factors (historical, economic, political, organizational, technological, professional, personal, etc.) which impinge on the production process and determine what is produced demand close scrutiny as well as those which influence how what is produced is used. In the past, the emphasis in research was on use, reaction, effects, influence, etc., not on ownership, control, structure, organization and production relationships..." (Halloron 1982:169-70)

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